Strategy Research Project

AEF Next: What is Next for Security Forces

by

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United States Air Force

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AEF NEXT: WHAT IS NEXT FOR SECURITY FORCES

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ABSTRACT

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The United States Air Force does not go to war as a team. This is experienced by Airmen, and recognized by leadership. Accordingly, an evolution of the AEF construct, called “AEF Next,” is in development. The AEF Next construct addresses the issues of force presentation, teaming, and deployment-to-dwell ratios for the entire Air Force. In the Security Forces career field, these issues are particularly evident. Security Forces currently deploy as individuals or squads. Those squads are not cohesive teams, and often are built from several bases. The Air Force solution is the Air Power Team, formed of unit-sized UTCs from a few aligned bases. These teams are capability based, and present the Air Force in a manner recognizable to the joint force. Though the Security Forces career field deploys more Airmen than any other career field, it will not fit the construct exactly. The purpose of this paper is to propose a way for the Security Forces to meet the intent of AEF Next.

AEF NEXT: WHAT IS NEXT FOR SECURITY FORCES

Air Force deployments are hard to understand, hard to sell, and hard to sustain. Currently the Air Force deploys Airmen using the AEF construct. Airmen are assigned to teams called Unit Type Codes (UTCs). The UTCs are deployed to join other UTCs to form an Expeditionary Squadron at a deployed location. That squadron works for an Expeditionary Group, and an Expeditionary Wing, in a Combatant Commander's AOR. The number of Airmen in a UTC varies from one to over three hundred. This depends on the capability provided by the UTC. For instance, a Security Forces Military Working Dog handler may deploy in a one-person UTC to join several other one-person UTCs like his to provide bomb detection capability to an Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron. At the same time, an entire F-15 Fighter Squadron will join with its home station Aircraft Maintenance Unit to form a single UTC of over 300 Airmen and deploy as an Expeditionary Fighter Squadron to a deployed location. In the current environment, the Military Working Dog handler will deploy for six months, every year, while the 300 Airmen assigned to the Fighter Squadron UTC will deploy for four months every sixteen months.

Unfortunately, the current AEF system is hard to understand by our Airmen, and hard to articulate to our Joint peers. It is also devoid of a team concept in the support fields. Individuals and small teams from a squadron are centrally tasked, sent to separate training events, and then deployed to different bases to join other individuals and small teams.

Fortunately, the Air Force has developed the AEF Next construct which will attempt to address some shortcomings of the current AEF. AEF Next provides

improvements over the current process in three major areas. First, AEF Next adjusts the current force presentation to work seamlessly with the joint community by building BCT- or MEU-like teams called Air Power Teams. Air Power Teams are capability based packages, and are easy to describe and present to the Combatant Command.[1] Second, AEF Next addresses the idea of "teaming" within the force. Deploying aircraft squadrons are not currently teamed with the support required to enable air operations other than maintenance support. At the individual level, the support is comprised of Airmen from all over the Air Force. One Expeditionary Squadron in a combat zone could be comprised of Airmen from over 50 bases.[2] AEF Next will use larger UTCs from fewer bases to build Air Power Teams. As directed by the Air Force Chief of Staff, some squadron leadership will train and deploy with these larger UTCs, requiring leader involvement throughout the entire process.[3] Third, with the recent reduction in requirements since the OIF drawdown, the Air Force can regulate deployment frequency for the entire force by assigning unit-like UTCs to Air Power Teams. Air Power Teams in the AEF Next construct are expected to transition from light activity (at 1:5 dwell), to major contingencies (at 1:2 dwell) without restructuring the process.[4] If required by the Secretary of Defense, the Air Force can surge to 1:1 dwell with 270-day tour lengths for APTs.

This paper describes the current Security Forces operating environment which will inform the reader of what shortcomings the current system has. It follows with a discussion of how the AEF Next construct addresses for the majority of the Air Force the three areas needing improvement. Finally, it proposes a method by which Security

Forces can evolve from the current operating construct to conform as close as possible to the AEF Next construct.

The Current Environment

The following description of the environment in which the Security Forces operate illustrates how the current garrison organization is not flexible enough to allow team integrity throughout an individual Airman's assignment. This is complicated by the deployment cycles. It will also illustrate how ad hoc the system is when an Airman's UTC is tasked to deploy. The United States Air Force Security Forces are directly tasked to defend airbases in any environment. In garrison, the size of the unit is influenced by several factors. The Protection Level of the resources assigned to an Air Force Base determines minimum posting requirements. The number of Protection Level resources will determine the size and number of restricted areas to be secured and therefore affect the size of the security force. The size and population of the installation itself and the operating environment in which the installation is located will also affect the size of the Security Forces squadron.

The typical Security Forces unit has from 2 to 9 officers, each in "one-deep" positions. The unit strength varies from 50 to over 400 Airmen, depending on the garrison missions. The organization, strength, and capabilities are primarily focused on in-garrison duties. Generally, bases on which Law Enforcement is the primary mission or bases with a small land area (e.g., pilot training bases) will require a small Security Forces squadron (50-125 Airmen). Bases with Protection Level 3 resources (e.g., fighter bases) will generally require a medium (126-230 Airmen) Security Forces squadron. Very large bases (e.g., Eglin AFB), or installations housing Protection Level 1 or 2

resources (some bomber bases), will require the largest squadrons (231+ Airmen).[5] The structure of each squadron is mandated by Air Force Instruction 31-101 and is organized according to the S-function construct.

A base's Security Forces Squadron is not structured to accommodate large deployments while providing the intended level of security at home station. All Air Force bases fall within Major Commands (MAJCOMs). The MAJCOM will allocate a deployment quota based upon the capabilities of the base and the requirements levied on the Air Force by the Joint Staff. For non-nuclear bases, that quota is currently approximately 20 percent of authorized airmen.[6] When the operational tempo increases, some bases will be tasked to deploy over 25 percent (sometimes as high as 40 percent) of authorized manning at one time.[7]

A Security Forces Airman goes into localized training for about a month after arriving at a new station. There he learns the local rules of engagement and gets brought up to standard in any other area required (e.g., local tactics, techniques, and procedures). After another 30 days of on-the-job training and acclimation, he is required to pass a standardization evaluation (STANEVAL) in order to be fully qualified to operate locally.[8]

While working and training, the Airman is assigned to an AEF pair (bucket), which will determine when he is eligible for deployment. Currently, an AEF bucket is comprised of individual Airmen from across the Air Force with very little team consistency. Once notified of a deployment, the Airman is scheduled for training at a MAJCOM level regional training center. There, he will go through three weeks of ground combat skills refresher training with his newly formed squad. That squad may or may

not be teamed with other squads deploying to the same location, as determined by AOR requirements and RTC scheduling. If scheduling permits, the Airman's squad will deploy directly from the training center to the deployed location. If the completion date of the RTC is too far in advance of the deployment (more than 10 days), the Airmen will return to their home stations until they deploy.

Once the squad arrives at the deployed location, it falls under the deployed Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron. This squadron is comprised of "bucket forces" which rotate in and out according to the AEF cycle. Because the squadron is not comprised of a single UTC, or even several large UTCs, it often splits incoming squad-sized UTCs to fill vacancies created by redeploying Airmen. The individual Airman will be assigned to a new flight within the Expeditionary Security Forces squadron where he will go through localized training and certification, similar to the process he went through when he arrived at home station. However, at deployed locations this is done as quickly as possible, as is "teaming." In some cases, the first time an Airman meets his deployed teammates is on patrol during his first shift of duty. Unfortunately, the Expeditionary Security Forces squadron will go through several AEF rotations like this in a year, perpetuating the lack of cohesiveness and effectiveness. After six months in theater, the Airman will re-deploy to his home station.

The frequency of deployment is determined by the "tempo band" in which the Airman is assigned. Security Forces Airmen are in Band E, which is a 1:1 dwell ratio.[9] In this band, Security Forces are training or deploying more than they are at home with the current standard of six-month deployments.

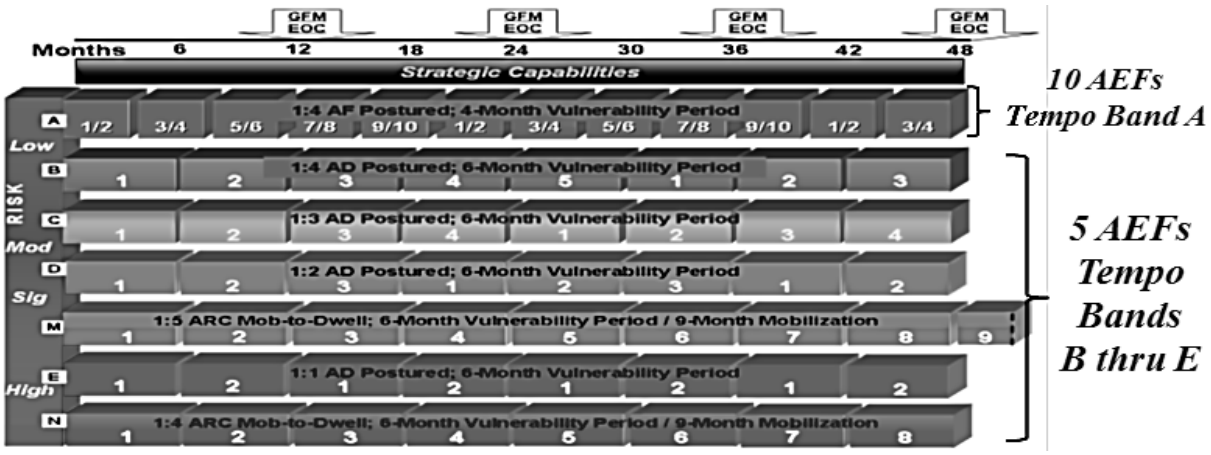

Figure 1. AEF Buckets and Tempo Bands[10]

After returning from the six month deployment, the Airman will get two weeks down-time (plus some leave if the mission allows), and then return to work day-to-day security operations. In less than six months, that cycle could repeat itself. In a three year tour, the typical Airman will deploy two or more times (depending on arrival time and bucket). With post-deployment rest-and-refit time, and pre-deployment training, the Airman often ends up working about one year of home-station duties during his three year tour.

The officer corps experience varies by base and MAJCOM. Currently, when an AEF squadron commander requirement exists at a deployed location, the Air Force selects a current or former squadron commander. In some locations, commanders do not deploy. After hiring a squadron commander through a centralized board, some group, wing, and MAJCOM commanders are hesitant to let that person deploy. However, in other MAJCOMs, unit commanders deploy (with as few as four other Airmen) for six month rotations, leaving their unit behind. When a Security Forces squadron commander does deploy, there is no readily available replacement in most

cases. In the current environment, the next ranking officer in the unit is at most a senior Captain.

Most company grade officer billets in Security Forces Squadrons are also one-deep, and have no replacement when they deploy. Yet, the company grade officers assigned to a squadron are deployed regularly. Security Forces company grade officers are in a 1:1 dwell, like the enlisted Airmen. Officer deployments are managed centrally by the functional career field, with little input from the officer's commander. Therefore, the commander cannot align his deploying officers with his deploying Airmen, further detracting from the teaming concept.

The Chief of Staff recognizes that there is a problem with the way the Air Force is managed. The Air Force does not present forces in an understandable, interchangeable manner. An AEF is comprised of a wide variety of capabilities in the Air Force inventory. This variable structure makes it difficult for the Air Force to communicate to the Combatant Commands and to the Joint Staff which capabilities are available, and when there is nothing left. AEF Next fixes this problem by grouping like-capabilities into Air Power Teams (APTs) similar to the Army's Brigade Combat Teams. The Chief of Staff made it clear that the Air Force would present forces in a basic structure that all can understand. AEF Next evolves the deployment process to address the issues of force presentation, teaming, and dwell time.

AEF Next

The AEF Next construct addresses the issue of force presentation by using Air Power Teams. In accordance with the Chief's vector directing the Air Force to evolve the AEF process to better align it with the joint community, Air Force core functions are

grouped by function. The resulting teams are more easily described and understood by both Airmen and the joint community. The six categories of Air Power Teams are Strike, C2ISR, Space and Cyberspace, Special Operations, Mobility, and Agile Combat Support. Within these six categories, there are 117 Air Power teams which the Air Force presents to the combatant commanders.[11]

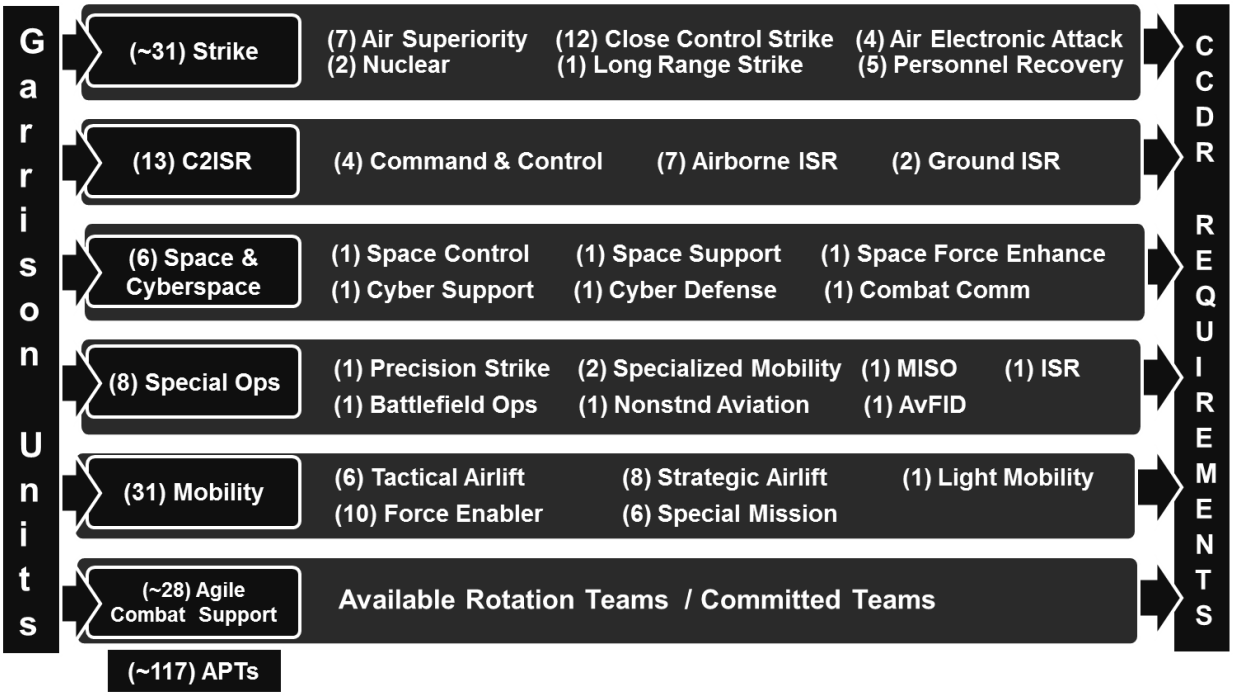

Figure 2. AEF Next Force Presentation[12]

In some cases the home station support mission enables a global capability, in which case the Agile Combat Support Airmen are non-deployable, or “deployed-in-place”.[13] For example, a Security Forces squadron at a base in the United States is considered deployed-in-place if it enables a nuclear mission. Those Airmen will comprise part of an Agile Combat Support APT supporting a Strike APT, but will not be available for forward deployment.[14]

Using the 117 Air Power Teams, the Air Force can present capabilities in an organized way to combatant commanders. The right-sized capability packages look much more like the Army's BCTs, the Navy's CSGs, and the Marines' MEUs.[15] Now, the Combatant Commander can see exactly what capabilities are available to him. It is also much easier for the Air Force to identify and explain to the joint community and civilian leadership when the critical number of APTs are committed, instead of the current practice of using the Air Force end-strength as the descriptor of when the force is nearing maximum effort.[16]

Of the 117 Air Power Teams, 28 of them are in the category of Agile Combat Support. These teams are multi-disciplinary and enable the operational APTs to accomplish their missions. One Agile Combat Support APT can support several operational APTs deployed to the same location. Unlike most of the operational APTs, however, the support APTs must maintain capabilities at home station while deploying large portions of units to support combatant commanders. This makes deploying as a unit difficult, though teaming is also an area targeted for improvement.

AEF Next addresses teaming in two ways. The first way, as directed by the Chief's vector, teams flying operations with mission support. AEF Next attempts to resolve this by adjusting the existing force generation model to align the support capability of bases with like-missions (e.g., fighter aircraft bases) and capabilities (e.g., similar sized squadrons) to form the Agile Combat Support APTs. One of the bases in the APT will then lead the APT when it deploys in the prescribed 1:2 dwell. During the next rotation a different base will lead.[17] This unit-sized, capability-based team will train, exercise, and deploy together.

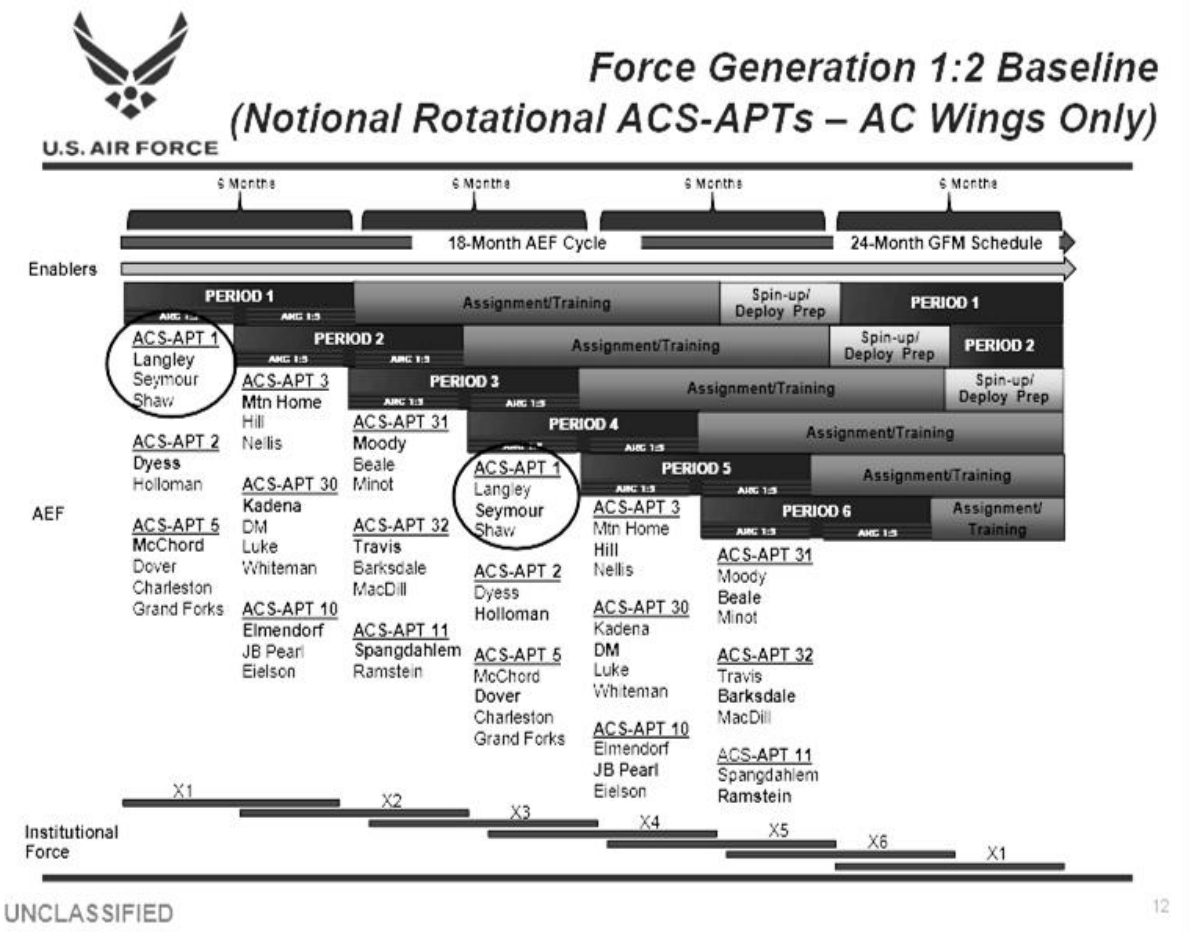

Figure 3. AEF Next Force Generation[18]

The second AEF Next improvement deals with team integrity. The Unit Type Code (UTC) is the basic building block of the AEF Next construct, as it is in the current system. UTCs are generally comprised of Airmen of a particular skill set. However, the largest UTCs are comprised of flying units and maintenance support. Because of this integrated capability, the operational APTs are generally comprised of a single UTC providing the needed capability. This team will train, exercise, and deploy, often with the flying squadron intact. At a fighter base it is not uncommon to have one of the three Fighter Squadrons, teamed with its dedicated maintenance support from the Maintenance Group, deployed, leaving behind only the broken aircraft and the non-deployable personnel. Flying UTCs are the model for the AEF Next Construct. The

super-squadron UTCs ensure leadership is involved at all stages of deployment. They are part of the team, at home station and the deployment site. In the support APTs, the UTCs are at sub-squadron level, allowing for the unit to accomplish the home-station mission while deploying several subordinate UTCs.

Under the AEF Next construct an individual Airman works day-to-day with his peers and supervisors until he is tasked to deploy. At this point, front-line supervisors and commanders are much more involved in the process than they currently are. The expectation is that they will be tasked as a single team, train as a team, and then deploy as a team, in the same organization as in garrison. Cohesion is inherent and dramatically improved over the current ad hoc individual deployments. When the large UTCs return to their home stations, they rejoin their home station squadron and recommence executing the garrison mission.

The third area AEF Next addresses is the frequency of deployments for the individual Airmen. Individually, Airmen are assigned to UTCs which build APTs. It follows that the tempo of the APT determines the tempo for the Airman. Therefore, all Airmen should be in a 1:2 dwell or better, unless directed by the SECDEF. The AEF Next battle rhythm will transition to a level between 1:5 and 1:2 dwell in accordance with Global Force Management guidance. The AEF Next construct will permit the Air Force to make this transition without reposturing forces.[19] The Air Power Team concept allows the Air Force leadership to see and explain when the force is approaching the “redline”, driving an unsustainable maximum surge of 1:1 dwell.

Air Power Teams are postured in six AEFs, in six-month increments, staggered to cover the Global Force Management cycle (see Figure 3). AEFs 1-3 are mirrored by

AEFs 4-6. For example, an APT aligned with Period 1 will deploy again in Period 4. The "unit-like" deployments support teaming and commander involvement. This force posturing provides stability for the Airmen, creates transparency for the joint force, and allows the Air Force to explain when it has reached its maximum effort.

AEF Next, as described in the preceding pages, evolves the current AEF construct away from the AEF bucket and tempo band concept, and towards the Air Power Teams. The APTs are easily understood by Airmen and the joint community. Though the UTC is still the building block used to deploy Airmen, in the AEF Next construct each AEF will draw UTCs from fewer bases. This grouping of UTCs supports the teaming concept envisioned by the Chief of Staff. Additionally, the APTs will be aligned with the Global Force Management cycle in a 1:2 dwell using six month deployments and twelve months at home station.

Security Forces Next

Having described the current Security Forces operating environment and how the AEF Next construct will improve force presentation and generation as a whole, the remainder of this paper will propose how the Security Forces career field can evolve to accommodate the AEF Next construct. The proposal focuses on the issues the AEF Next has addressed: force presentation, teaming, and dwell time.

Force presentation is at the root of the problem for Security Forces. Though there are several UTCs with different sizes and capabilities, Security Forces currently use the 13-man squad UTC as the basic building block for the Expeditionary Security Forces squadrons. This squad often exists only on paper, and is pulled together from across the home station squadron, sometimes from across several Security Forces squadrons.

In these cases, there is no teaming until the squad gets to the Regional Training Center (sometimes less than a month prior to deployment), and no continuity of leadership throughout the process.

AEF Next attempts to solve these problems by building Expeditionary Security Forces squadrons using fewer bases as the UTC sources. Currently, a 600- person Expeditionary Security Forces squadron can draw from over 50 home station squadrons. Teaming bases together and pulling UTCs from fewer bases may help improve the dwell ratio, but it does not solve the force presentation, or the teaming, problem. Without significant change, the squad will still be the basic building block, and there will be little teaming with leadership throughout the process.

The Security Forces career field needs to evolve its organizational concept, as did the AEF process. One example of a more flexible organizational construct is the 820th Base Defense Group (originally the 820th Security Forces Group). The 820th may offer a model to adapt the regular security forces organizational concept. In 1996, the terrorist attack on Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia ignited the concept of a group of Base Defenders whose primary mission is to deploy to contingencies. That group, the 820th Security Forces Group (now the 820th Base Defense Group), stood up in 1997 as the premier security force professionals, experts in integrated defense of Airmen and Airpower. The group is also designed to be a “first-in” force, capable of airborne operations to open airfields in austere and semi-permissive environments. The mission at home station is to train for the next deployment. It is a unique concept in the Air Force, comprised of a completely integrated group of 12 different Air Force Specialty Codes (AFSCs) with the sole mission of deployed base defense.

Today, the 820th Base Defense Group consists of three Base Defense squadrons and one Combat Operations squadron. Because of its unique structure and capabilities, the 820th does not fall into the AEF cycle. However, with over 200 personnel assigned to each of the three Base Defense squadrons, the Group sustains a large rotation to the CENTCOM AOR. Because the squadrons deploy as a whole, the squadron commander assumes command of the Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron at the deployed location. Under the current AEF construct, regular Security Forces “bucket forces” augment the squadron as needed.

Part of the uniqueness of the 820th Base Defense Group is the integration of the other career fields. This “Joined to Fight” mix allows the group to operate autonomously. The other reason the group is unique is the organizational structure. The three Base Defense squadrons are identical: 201 personnel, including a headquarters element, a functional staff, and three flights. These squadrons deploy, while the Combat Operations Squadron is fixed at the home station. The Combat Operations Squadron is a multi-disciplinary squadron, and provides the training, equipment, planning, and other reach-back support for the Base Defense Squadrons.[20]

Consistency of leadership is critical to the success of the concept. The Airmen who get assigned to the 820th BDG might remain under the same supervisor for an entire three year tour. Those Airmen will deploy not only with their immediate supervisor, but with every layer of supervision up to the squadron commander. This is in line with the goal of the AEF Next for leadership involvement and consistency.

Typically, the 820th BDG operates similar to a flying Operations Group. At any given time, one squadron will be conducting mission-focused preparation for the next

deployment. The training plan is overseen and supported by the Combat Operations Squadron. A second squadron is already deployed to the contingency, whether that is in a combat zone or some other operational environment. That unit will be on mission for a six-month cycle, unless re-missioned. The third squadron will have just redeployed from the last mission, and will begin to rest and refit. This phase allows for specialty training, PME, PCS, and assignment and training of new members.

The 820th Base Defense Group and its subordinate squadrons have been operating similar to the AEF Next construct for years. The issues addressed by the evolution of the AEF are answered. First, the concept presents a recognizable entity to the Joint community. Each squadron provides a consistent capability. Second, unit integrity enables teaming and cohesion during the mission and during dwell. Finally, the structure is sustainable in a 1:2 deploy-to-dwell ratio.[21]

A primary reason that the 820th is successful, however, is because it does not have a home station mission. There is no in-garrison mission to detract from training. Regular Security Forces units have a primary home station mission that must be accomplished every hour of every day. Without Air Force Security Forces reorganization, and changing some thought processes, a regular line unit cannot use the 820th as a model for organization to meet the intent of the AEF Next.

The following discussion proposes a change to Security Forces Squadron organization to enable Security Forces to use the model of the 820th. The physical changes are to organizational structure. The cognitive change is in risk acceptance by the home station Wing Commander. The organization of a typical Security Forces squadron has not changed along with the change in the operational environment. The

transition from a garrison focus to an expeditionary force requires flexibility, while maintaining adequate security in garrison. The Air Force trend has been one of risk avoidance both at the deployed location and in garrison. Today's fiscal constraints require a change in that mentality and in Security Forces organization.

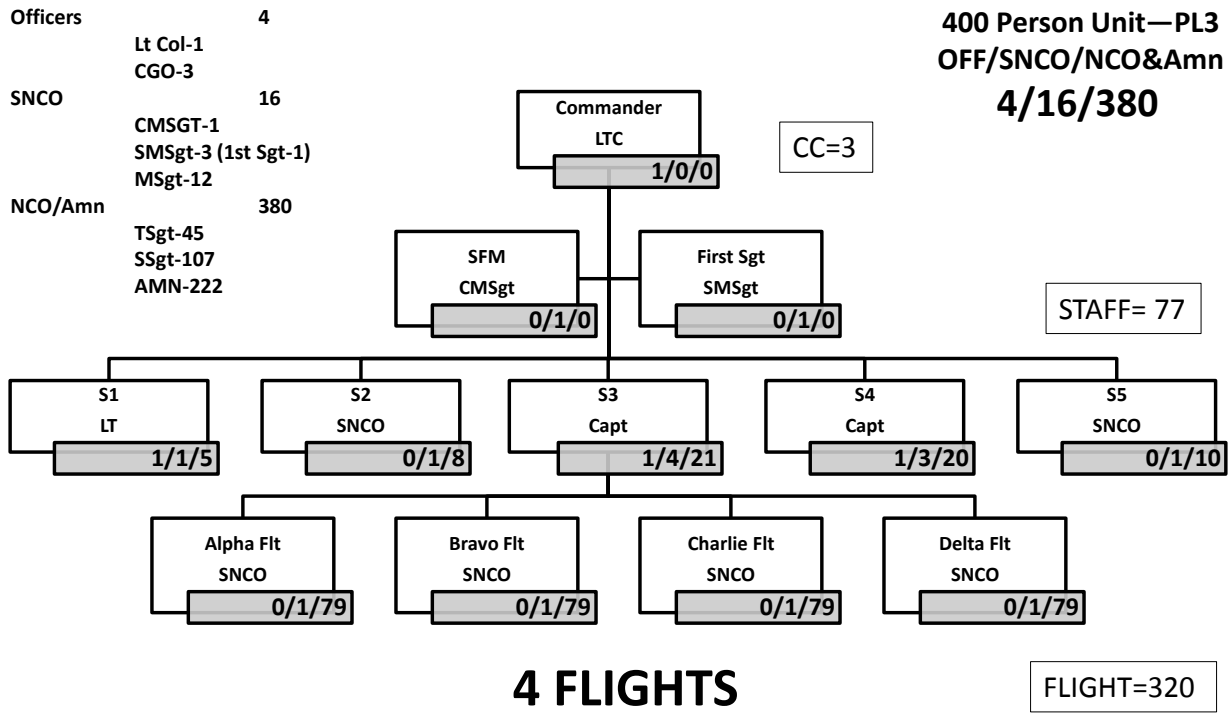

Figure 4. Current Security Forces Squadron Structure – Typical, Large

The most recent Security Forces organizational change updated the previous overhead staff organization to the current S-staff organization depicted in the chart above (Figure 4). The change aligned the career field with the joint community, but did little more than reorganize the squadron staff; no new capability was created. The following proposed structure will better meet the requirements for an expeditionary force.

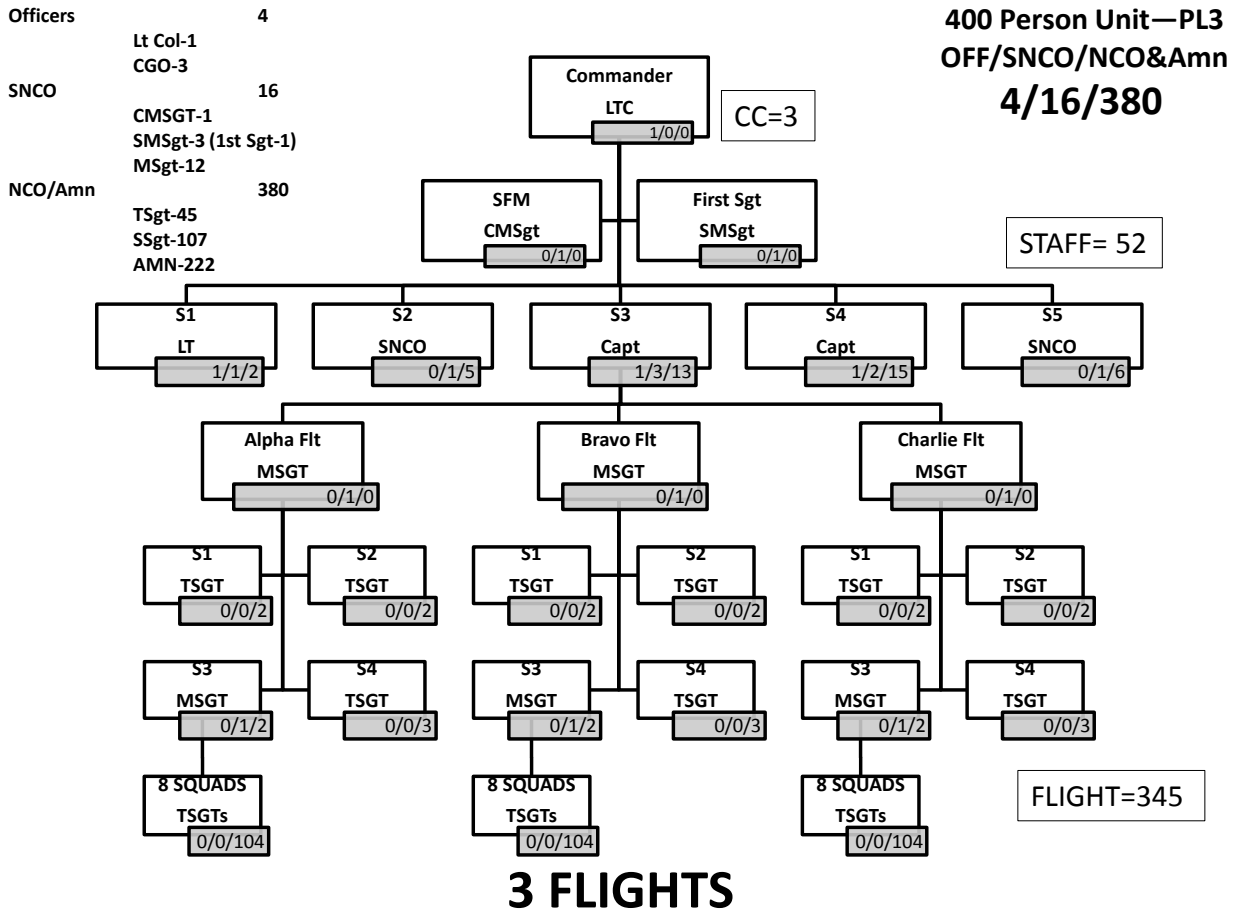

Figure 5. Evolved Security Forces Squadron Structure – Typical, Large

The proposed headquarters element remains similar to the current organizational model. The staff remains organized in the S-function structure, yet is reduced in size. Some loss of capability is mitigated by utilizing the on-duty flight's S-staff. The squadron staff would retain the ability to provide basic services to the external customers (the Wing), and prepare the Operations Flights for duty in garrison and when deployed.

The operational flights are organized in three identical stand-alone flights, working directly for the S3. The flight headquarters is comprised of a Flight Sergeant (SNCO) and several Security Forces NCOs and airmen working as the S-1 through the S-4. In garrison, this staff chops to the squadron staff to help mitigate reduced

capability. When deployed, they integrate with the Expeditionary Security Forces squadron staff. In this manner, functionality exists between the flights and the garrison squadron, and while deployed the flight is prepared to operate on its own or as part of an expeditionary squadron.

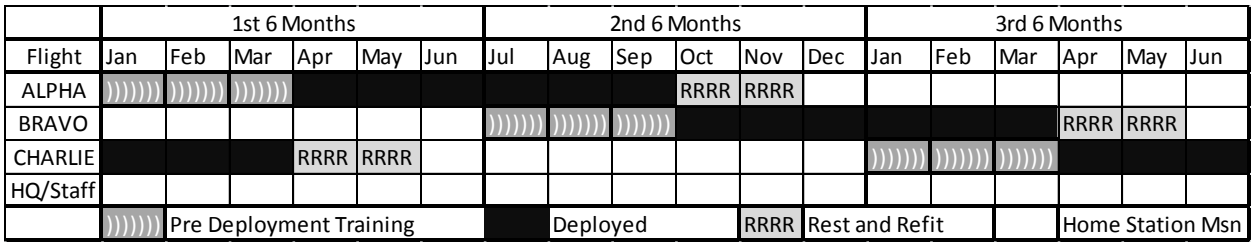

Figure 7. 1:2 Deployment to Dwell Cycle

The three Operational Flights (Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie Flights) act similar to the squadrons of the 820th. However, there is always one flight dedicated to garrison duties. A narrative of the concept using a 1:2 dwell follows. Alpha provides security and law enforcement for the home station for seven to nine months, while Bravo is deployed and Charlie is conducting local training and Regional Training Center requirements, and preparing to deploy. As Charlie deploys, Bravo returns and begins refitting after a six-month deployment. Bravo Flight then goes through ancillary training, while individuals are PCSing in and out. Bulk leave is encouraged, and PME is assigned and conducted. Alpha continues to work garrison duties. After Bravo has conducted rest and recuperation, it will double up with Alpha in garrison duties. Approximately three months prior to deployment, Alpha will transfer authority to Bravo and begin pre-deployment training. As Alpha departs, Charlie returns, and Bravo continues to work garrison duties. This cycle describes the 1:2 dwell that AEF Next requires. A lower dwell means more Security Forces Airmen available to the home station commander, and that additional security measures can be executed.

During a higher operations tempo, the Air Force will go to a 1:1 dwell if directed by the Secretary of Defense. The AEF Next calls for 9-month expected tour lengths in a 1:1 dwell. The Security Forces Squadron will have less training time at the beginning and end of the deployments. Minimal ground combat skills training would be accomplished at home station, and would be done at the Regional Training Center prior to deployment. Also, the in-garrison RIP/TOA process will be extremely abbreviated. Depending on departure time for the outgoing flight, the transfer may be done in less than a week.

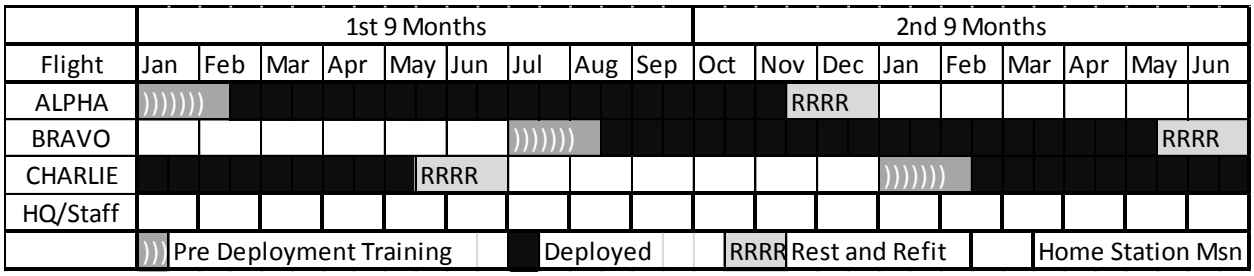

Figure 8. Notional 1:1 Dwell.

The second major area of change is cognitive. Wing Commanders will have to accept additional risk to base security. Current deployment levels have driven in-garrison Security Forces to work non-standard duty hours in order to meet minimum manning. Because an entire flight deploys together, the proposal does not improve this condition unless the dwell is better than 1:3. Security Forces are experiencing some relief in dwell since the end of OIF, with the number of deployed Security Forces Airmen dropping from over 4500 to just over 2600.[22] Though there are no guarantees that requirements will remain at this level or lower, a 1:3 dwell is a reasonable assumption for steady-state. To make this risk acceptance possible, the Air Force must accept Security Forces structure beyond the minimum required for garrison security. An

additional 33 percent in the number of flights beyond that required to provide the minimum garrison security posture is required to sustain an expeditionary capability. Additionally, external customers will have to accept less responsive products and services from the Security Forces squadron's smaller staff. Some non-essential services that are traditionally provided by security forces would cease or be restricted considerably.[23] For example, additional base entry points would not be opened for the convenience of the base population and pro-active law enforcement functions such as bike patrol, D.A.R.E, and Joint Drug Enforcement Team participation would be restricted significantly.[24] Finally, to mitigate the loss of response capability, Security Forces staff personnel would be armed when on duty. This is a current practice at some bases; this proposal will make it a mandatory practice.

The AEF Next also changes the deployment management mindset for Security Forces. Using the Security Forces Flight as the basic building block adjusts the calculus from the many-base, many-squad process currently used, to fewer bases and fewer cohesive flights to build pre-identified Air Power Teams. However, the squadron headquarters UTCs will continue to be built from multiple bases, with the officers managed and deployed centrally; otherwise, some bases will be without a headquarters. Though this is not optimal, it is required to provide the balance between sustainable garrison security operations and deployed Security Forces operations.

The proposed restructuring of Security Forces and the adjusted operational concept provide the Security Forces Flight as the basic building block for both garrison and expeditionary capabilities. That flight is a cohesive team with built in leadership, and

though the team is not at the squadron level, it is significantly improved over the current system.

The Analysis

Using the FAS (Feasibility, Acceptability, Suitability) test, the following analysis discusses whether the proposal is executable, whether it is acceptable, and whether it meets the requirements of the AEF Next.

First, is this proposal feasible? The current Air Force Security Forces end strength is adequate to accommodate the recommended change to squadron organization. Restructuring the squadrons will require Air Force Security Forces Headquarters approval and impetus, but without additional manning there are no substantial reasons to believe that it cannot be implemented.

The training resources currently available at the Regional Training Centers are adequate for the need. The proposed reorganization should actually provide increased opportunities for home-station training, which has been lacking. Currently it is extremely difficult to release an entire flight for training. In fact, most training opportunities are created by taking off-duty time away from the Airmen. The proposed structure allows for at least one month of training at the beginning of the garrison duties, and at least two months of training prior to deployment. Therefore, the unit will receive advanced, team-based, and mission-focused training at the Regional Training Center, rather than basic individual training.

Equipping the new structure is not an issue. Security Forces Squadrons currently maintain Logistical Detail (LOGDET) equipment for each UTC assigned to the squadron. Equipment-only UTCs (e.g., vehicles, some communication gear, tactical

sensor kits) will be managed at the MAJCOM or Air Force level. Without an increase in end strength, the proposed structure will require the same equipment, with the current schedule of modernization. In a steady state deployment, equipment in use at deployed locations remains in place. For new locations, either the 820th or a Contingency Reaction Group will deploy first with equipment, and regular APTs will follow and fall in on the equipment set. Regional Training Centers are already equipped for the training mission, and no additional home station equipment is needed to execute this proposal.

The force is managed within the constraints of current manning; it is trained utilizing existing resources; and it is equipped in the same manner as the existing force. The feasibility of the proposal is also based on the assumption that deployment requirements will not rise to the combined OIF and OEF levels. The pre-9/11 deployment requirement for Security Forces was approximately 1500 Airmen. During OIF and OEF the number peaked at over 4500 Airmen. At a 1:1 dwell, this required a pool of over 9000 deployable Security Forces Airmen. Currently, the deployment requirement has dropped to just over 2600, and is expected to decrease again with the culmination of OEF. At these requirement levels, the 1:2 dwell or better is a reasonable assumption.

Second, is the proposal acceptable? At the Air Force level, the cost of this proposal is negligible. With no increase in manpower or equipment, the most significant change is how Security Forces Airmen are deployed. In the proposed structure, the Airmen are teamed in a flight-sized element throughout the garrison and expeditionary operations. The proposed structure meets the intent of the AEF next construct as closely as possible due to career field constraints.

The proposal assumes the Wing Commander will accept the risk associated with an entire Security Forces flight deploying as a team. The cost of this proposal is the reduction of forces available to conduct home-station security. In the current environment this manpower drain is less evident, because the deployment requirements are met by pulling Airmen from across the entire squadron. Each flight provides small numbers to build a deployment team, and covers the loss internally. This proposal supports the deployment of one flight at a time. Though two flights remain on station, one is conducting rest and refit, while the other secures the base, with a short overlap period during which two flights are on garrison duty. For most of the year, in a 1:2 dwell, there is only one flight available for in-garrison duties. However, in a non-standard duty schedule, each flight can meet minimum posting requirements. One benefit to the proposal is the drastic increase in time available for in-garrison training. The current structure does not allow for flight sized training events. The proposed structure allows for several months of training. This increase in training will partially mitigate the reduction in available numbers of Security Forces Airmen providing garrison security.

The benefits of the proposed structure outweigh the costs and risks. While there are fewer Airmen conducting the home station mission, the level of training for those Airmen is improved due to the dedicated blocks of training time built into the cycle. Base defense at the deployed location benefits from the additional training, as well as the teaming created by the proposed structure.

Finally, is the proposal suitable? The Chief of Staff directed the AEF Next planners to address the following problems: force presentation, teaming, and a 1:2 dwell. The proposal here addresses each of those problems.

The AEF Next construct presents the Air Force in Air Power Teams. These large, capability based teams consist of large UTCs from a group of aligned bases. The process of deploying squadron sized teams from each base will not work for regular Security Forces Squadrons. It depletes the number of Security Forces Airmen available for home the station mission below the minimum required. However, the intent of using larger UTCs to form Air Power Teams is met. Deployment planners can use Security Forces flights from a single base consisting of multiple squads to minimize the number of different bases required to create an Expeditionary Security Forces squadron on an Air Power Team. For example, a notional Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron at a base in a semi-permissive environment may require 600 Security Forces Airmen. Currently, AEF planners will pull squads and individuals from over 50 bases to fill the requirements. The AEF Next construct deploys most of one entire squadron and large portions of several other squadrons aligned on the Air Power Team. Though entire Security Forces squadrons cannot be deployed under this proposal, planners could meet requirements by targeting less than ten bases using cohesive flights.

The flight sized UTC also addresses the teaming issue, though not at the squadron level as desired. The AEF Next construct plans to deploy squadrons almost intact, including commanders and leadership. This unit sized deployment will not work for units with home-station missions. Security Forces must retain the capability at home-station to defend and secure the base. The proposed Security Forces Squadron structure, however, can meet the intent to have a cohesive team including consistent leadership throughout the deployment process by deploying flights. The Flight Leader, a Senior NCO, will work with the Airmen everyday while at home-station, in pre-

deployment training, and while deployed. This meets the intent of teaming, and is a marked improvement over the current practice.

Organizing the squadron according to the proposal creates the opportunity for the Security Forces to finally to align with the rest of the Air Force. The squadron can operate indefinitely at a 1:2 dwell, and can provide tailored security according to the Wing Commander's risk acceptance.[25] This proposed change in organizational structure and mission execution is suitable to the needs of the AEF Next construct.

The proposed change to the operational concept is a presentable, sustainable Security Forces Flight which will be used to build Air Power Teams. The flight will have integral and consistent leadership, and will be a formed team throughout the entire deployment cycle. This is what the Air Force Chief of Staff directed.

In a future environment, perhaps one less fiscally constrained, the next evolution of the security forces could include additional officer and senior NCO leadership in each squadron, particularly in leading each flight. Additional officer and senior NCO billets will require a manpower validation, and re-positioning of any overage officer or senior NCO into the newly authorized billets.[26] Additionally, adding a Field Grade Officer Deputy Commander (CD) and a Company Grade Director of Staff (DS) would enable the commander, or the deputy, to deploy with minimized negative impact on the garrison mission.

The preceding discussion describes how the Air Force Security Forces can integrate with the AEF Next construct. Though the AEF Next construct is exactly what the Air Force needs for the future, Security Forces cannot meet the AEF Next intent unless the structure of the Security Forces career field is adjusted. The suggested

solution to the problem aligns the largest career field in the Air Force as closely as possible with the AEF Next construct. By implementing this proposal, Security Forces will train together as a team at the flight level; they will deploy as a team with leadership intact; they will redeploy and have time to develop their careers, family, and person; and they will defend the home station. Though the Air Force Security Forces have not been able to align with the rest of the Air Force in the previous paradigm, this proposal will bring them very close to the AEF Next concept.

Endnotes

[1] "AEF Next-AF Force Presentation," briefing slides with commentary, EFSS Conference November, 2012, slide 14.

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[3] Mitch Gettle, "Air Force Refines Force Presentation, Generation," The Official Web site of the United States Air Force, http://www.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123280212 (accessed March 17, 2012).

[4] Ibid.

[5] U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Security Forces Awards Program*, Air Force Instruction 36-2848, pt. 11. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Air Force, 2000), 5.

[6] Gillespie, Bryan, Lt Col, USAF, U.S. Department of the Air Force, Air Force Security Forces, Security Forces (SF) Prioritization And Sequencing Guidance, Guidance Letter, pt. VII, b (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Air Force, 1 December 2009), 14.

[7] Ibid.

[8] U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Security Forces Training And Standardization Evaluation Programs*, Air Force Instruction 36-2225, pt. 4.5.4.3. (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Air Force, 28 April 2009), 20.

[9] Ibid.

[10] AFPC/DPWPE, "AEF Next," February, 2012, slide 3, https://aef.afpc.randolph.af.mil/aef_next/AEF_NEXT_16Feb12.pdf (accessed March 17, 2012).

[11] Ibid, slide 5.

[12] Ibid., slide 6.

[13] Sarah Lifshin, “Top Enlisted Airman Addresses Quality-of-Life Issues,” U.S. Department of Defense News, http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=59314 (accessed March 19, 2012).

[14] Michael Hoffman, “New Command Wants Airmen For Nuclear Mission,” *Air Force Times*, August 17, 2009. http://www.airforcetimes.com/news/2009/08/airforce_nuclear_081709w/ (accessed March 19, 2012).

[15] AFPC/DPWPE, “AEF Next,” slide 4.

[16] “AEF Next-AF Force Presentation,” slide 17.

[17] AFPC/DPWPE, “AEF Next,” slide 13.

[18] Ibid., slide 12.

[19] “AEF Next-AF Force Presentation,” slide 16.

[20] “820th Base Defense Group,” The Official Website of Moody Air Force Base, http://www.moody.af.mil/library/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=4459 (accessed March 17, 2012).

[21] Ibid.

[22] Lt Col Robert C. Frederiksen, USAF, Chief, Contingency Ops and Plans Branch HQ USAF/A7SX, telephone interview by author, March 19, 2012.

[23] Gillespie, pt. VI, h, 12.

[24] Air Force Instruction 31-201, pt. 2.4.1.3.

[25] Ibid., pt. 3.

[26] Capt. Damien Williams, USAF, Security Forces Assignment Officer, AFPC/DPASB, telephone interview by author, March 19, 2012.